

Florida Assoc. for Child Care Management, Inc.
F.A.C.C.M.

*“The Integral Importance of Private Sector Involvement in the
Pre-Kindergarten/Early Education Structure”*

Present

School Readiness

Purpose:

- 1 Increase children’s chances of achieving future educational success.
- 2 To enable parents to work and be financially self- sufficient.

Eligible Participants:

1. Children at risk of abuse, neglect or exploitation
2. Economically disadvantaged children
3. Participants in the welfare transition program
4. Children of teen parents
5. Children of migrant farm workers
6. Children of working families who income does not exceed 150% of poverty level.
7. Children with disabilities

Present Programs

1. Early child hood development programs 0 to 3 in both the public and private sector.
2. Head start
3. Pre-kindergarten 4 year old programs in both the public and private sector
4. After school care
5. Family child care
6. Faith based care
7. Relative care

Success of the Pre- Kindergarten programs

1. The 2001/2002 pre-kindergarten DOE assessment showed 83% of Florida’s children were ready for kindergarten.

Private Provider Role:

1. Provide 630 thousand slots for childcare/education programs.
2. Provide slots for after school care.

Costs:

1. Present monies allocated to readiness \$700 million of state and federal dollars.
2. 80% of readiness monies are federal dollars.

Amendment 8

Universal Pre Kindergarten

Purpose:

1. To provide free quality pre kindergarten education to all of Florida's four year olds.

Eligible Participants:

- 1 All children that are 4 as of September 1, 2005.

Present Programs for (non-need) 4 year olds:

1. Parent paid for pre-school programs
2. Parent paid for Faith Based Child Care
3. Parent paid for pre-kindergarten programs
4. Limited public pre-kindergarten programs based on a sliding scale.

Success of Programs

1. Public school records showed that 84 % of all children entering kindergarten for the year 2002 were ready for kindergarten.
2. Georgia's assessment of their universal pre-Kindergarten program for the 1999 and 2000 school year showed the following:

Private Providers Role:

1. Provide programming for approximately 98,000 four year olds.

Costs:

1. State allocation 0

2. Private investment dollars
3. National economic indicators:
 - 2.8 million jobs
 - 9 billion in tax revenues

Costs

Cost for implementation of amendment 8

Keep present system in place.

1. Keep needs based programs together in the Agency for Workfare to continue the two roles of the readiness program.
 - Enable parents to work and be financially self-sufficient.
 - Increase children's chances for achieving future educational success.
2. Create a scholarship program for all other four-year-olds.

Savings and quality incentives:

1. Allow only accredited schools to participate in the program thus continuing to increase the quality of pre kindergarten education in Florida
2. Use of existing infrastructure has the following financial savings
 - Capital Improvements \$0
 - Infra structure and new class rooms \$0
 - Burden placed on over burdened over crowded schools 0.
3. Estimated cost of scholarship for a 6 hr day 180 day year \$3,500.
4. Estimated cost based on 70% participation of a scholarship program 400 million.
5. Separation of need based program from universal pre-kindergarten will enable the Legislature to use lottery dollars for scholarships.

The Integral Importance of Private Sector Involvement in the Pre-Kindergarten / Early Education Structure

Florida has made immense strides in the early education of young children through the efforts of quality facilities staffed by caring and dedicated teachers.

1. The private sector early education and childcare provider has been instrumental in preparing young children for successful entry into the K-12 school system for decades.
2. The increasing number of voluntarily accredited preschools and childcare centers reflects the dedication and commitment of the private sector to quality. The State of Florida recognizes this achievement by awarding the Gold Seal of Quality to accredited centers.
3. The private provider has the infrastructure in place to readily serve pre-kindergarten children: classrooms, playgrounds and equipment that are sized right and developmentally appropriate for young children.
4. The Administrators or Directors of private preschools / child care centers are specialized professionals who have met educational and experiential requirements to serve in positions that demand well-rounded knowledge in child development and program administration.
5. Teachers in private sector childcare settings have training that is specific to young children and their unique needs and learning modalities. This training is kept current of the most recent research and updated through continuing education each year.
6. The Florida School Readiness Performance Standards for Three year olds and Four year olds, developed by the Florida Partnership for School Readiness, are being implemented now. The standards address the full range of children's development including physical health, approaches to learning, social and emotional development, cognitive development and general knowledge and motor development. These standards are aligned with the Florida Sunshine Standards used in the public school system.
7. Parental involvement, considered to be extremely important to children's success in school, occurs daily with direct face-to-face meetings as well as with written communication in the private sector.
8. In addition to the early education program, the private sector provider offers an extended day and extended year program to meet the needs of working parents.
9. Perhaps, most importantly, neuroscience research proves that brain development occurs most rapidly during the first 3 years of life. The private sector is already engaged in providing this true, developmental school readiness program that starts at birth and continues through kindergarten entry.
10. Private providers have continually demonstrated their commitment to young children by investing millions of dollars of their own money thereby creating thousands of jobs that contribute directly to the economy of Florida.
11. One final factor that must be considered is the importance of the private sector as providers of an essential service within the community. For parents to be productive in the workforce, safe, affordable, quality early education/child care arrangements must be available for children beginning at birth. The economic balance within a center is directly affected by the ages of the children in attendance with the older children providing an internal subsidy for the younger children. The upsetting of this balance will lead to infant and toddler care becoming exceedingly scarce as private providers discontinue providing the service or outrageously costly if one is fortunate enough to find it. This will have a direct effect on the workforce.